

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT PINS UK
SUBJECT: NORTHERN IRELAND: PROTESTS AND PERSONALITIES

1. IN QUAIN T VARIATIONS OF THE USUAL POLITICAL PROTEST,
WESTMINSTER ON JULY 6 WITNESSED: A) THE REV IAN PAISLEY,
MP FROM NORTHERN IRELAND INTERRUPT AND DENOUNCE THE FIRST
ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS HELD IN THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER
SINCE THE REFORMATION; AND B) THE USE OF HORSE DUNG IN
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TO DRAMATIZE ALLEGED POOR PRISON
CONDITIONS FOR IRISH PRISONERS IN BRITAIN.

2. PAISLEY, ALSO HEAD OF THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY
IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AND HIS FELLOW MP, REV ROBERT

BRADFORD, WAS ALLOWED BY PREARRANGEMENT WITH ORGANIZERS
OF THE MASS (IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN UNITY, AS THE
TIMES PUT IT) TO MAKE THEIR PROTEST AT THE START OF THE
CEREMONY IN ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL, BELOW WESTMINSTER
HALL, MARKING THE FIVE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
BIRTH OF SIR THOMAS MORE. AS MASS WAS ABOUT TO BE
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CONDUCTED BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER, CARDINAL
BASIL HUME, PAISLEY TOOK THE FLOOR TO SAY (AMONG OTHER
THINGS) THAT THE MASS WAS A "BLASPHEMOUS FABLE AND A
DANGEROUS DECEIT" AND THAT IT "CANNOT REVERSE 400 YEARS
OF HISTORY." AFTER PAISLEY AND BRADFORD SPOKE AND
DEPARTED, THE CEREMONY, DESIGNED TO SYMBOLIZE THE
RECONCILIATION OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES, CONTINUED WITHOUT

FURTHER INCIDENT.

3. IN AN UNRELATED INCIDENT LATER IN THE DAY, TWO PERSONS (ONE LATER IDENTIFIED AS YANA MINTOFF, DAUGHTER OF MALTA'S PRIME MINISTER) WERE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AND CHARGED BY POLICE AFTER HURLING THREE BAGS OF HORSE DUNG INTO THE CHAMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, STRIKING FURNITURE AND DISRUPTING PROCEEDINGS, BUT INJURING NOTHING BUT THE FEELINGS OF DODGING MPS. THE LAUNCHING OF THEIR MISSILES WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SHOUTS OF SUPPORT FOR IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS.

4. GROUPS OF PROTESTERS ALREADY IN LONDON TO DRAMATIZE ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST IRISH PRISONERS IN BRITISH JAILS QUICKLY DISSOCIATED THEMSELVES FROM THE COMMONS INCIDENT. HOWEVER, THE IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS SUPPORT GROUP (FORMED THE DAY BEFORE) SAID THEIR OWN, MORE PEACEFUL PROTESTS WOULD CONTINUE IN ENGLAND BY RELATIVES OF THE IMPRISONED. ONE SUCH DEMONSTRATION RESULTED IN THE ARREST OF FOUR WOMEN FOR BLOCKING TRAFFIC NEAR BUCKINGHAM PALACE. THEIR DEMANDS INCLUDE REPATRIATION TO NORTHERN IRELAND JAILS AND REFORMS IN PRISON CONDITIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL STATUS FOR "POLITICAL" PRISONERS.

5. THE HOME OFFICE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT GROUPS OF PRISONERS IN SEVERAL ENGLISH JAILS HAVE RECENTLY GONE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON HUNGER STRIKES, BUT DENIED ANY ASSAULTS OR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE PRISONERS. IT REITERATED EARLIER STATEMENTS BY THE HOME SECRETARY (REES) THAT 93 PERSONS "CONNECTED WITH THE IRA" WERE SERVING SENTENCES FOR TERRORIST OFFENCES IN JAILS IN ENGLAND OR WALES; 75 OF WHOM WERE SUBJECT ONLY TO NORMAL PROCEDURES ACCORDED TO ALL "HIGH-RISK" PRISONERS. THE HOME OFFICE ASSERTED SENTENCES WOULD BE SERVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW AND THAT NO SPECIAL POLITICAL STATUS OR AMNESTY WOULD BE GRANTED THEM.

BREWSTER

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